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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the progressive/collaborative model high school program, a model designed to facilitate student movement from special day classes into regular classroom environments with an ongoing emphasis on serving at-risk students. Charts outline options available to special education students through this model and differences between traditional models and the progressive/collaborative model for referral, assessment, curriculum, and evaluation. Contains three references. (PB)

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THE PROGRESSIVE/COLLABORATIVE HIGH SCHOOL; A MODEL PROGRAM

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Council for Exceptional Children
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Evelyn Deno's cascade of service delivery (Deno, 1970), has served as the benchmark in the discussion of service delivery to the handicapped since the 1970s. Typically, this model advocates a dual system with distinct separation between the categorical programs (specifically special education), and the regular education program. Secondary schools have had a mixed record in following this model. In order to establish an integrated, unified system, an expanded continuum of service delivery is needed. One such model, designed to better meet the needs of "at risk" students, those identified as special education students as well as those in need of additional services (but not officially identified), is proposed.

Madeline Will's Regular Education Initiative (Will, 1986) prompted special educators to explore their interest and commitment for serving the "at risk" child. Special educators, however interested, have expressed concern that by doing so, service to the identified student will be diminished. In California, after considerable misunderstandings, we have been directed by Patrick Campbell, Director of the Special Education Division, not to work with non-handicapped students unless the district applies and receives a "waiver" from the state and operates their special education program within the mandates of the School-Based Coordination Act of 1981. This Act states that non-identified students may be served as long as those students with current IEPs are receiving appropriate service (Vasquez-Chairez & MacMillan, 1989).

The disparity between philosophical beliefs and current practices has encouraged a number of secondary schools to explore other means to effectively and efficiently deliver appropriate service. The development of this unique secondary school program, which began in February 1989, can be referred to as a ***progressive/collaborative model***. This model allows

for an integrated, comprehensive system that easily fosters students' movement between the special day class all the way "up" the continuum to regular education and serves the needs of the special education as well as the "at risk" student.

The typical "traditional" high school special education program is not well defined, either of itself, or as part of the total school program. This program, established by state/district mandate, is usually *reactive*, that is, it attempts to identify and serve those students that the regular program can not or will not. Hence, the special education program is defined by the regular education program (for better or for worse). The administration and faculty may believe that it is meeting student needs, but on further inspection, it is not; it is supplying a service to regular education by removing those students not meeting academic and/or behavioral criteria. In addition, the "traditional" school may not truly believe that the non-identified"at risk" student is an integral and important part of their educational family. They may say he is, but on review of the curriculum and specific course offerings, one will find that whereas "honors" or advanced placement classes are well staffed and respected, the "lower level" classes are given short shrift; often housed in isolated classrooms or in portables annexed to the main campus. In many traditional schools, if there are "bonehead" classes, the faculty and students, know that only the first year or worst teachers are assigned to these sections. The "bonehead" class may not be part of the continuum in that there is not a smooth transition between higher level and lower level offerings; it is simply a place to dump students.

A review of the school's philosophy may reveal an inherent bias away from programs for the "low achieving" student. This discrepancy, which obviously is part of the problem, was clearly evident at one high

school we observed, a school that "saw" itself as an academic school. Honors classes were very important, most students went on to four year colleges--- the reality was that less than 40% of the students went on to college and under the veneer of faculty and staff satisfaction was frustration and concern that many students were not achieving and that there may not have been programs available for these students. In this traditional high school, a significant gap exists between the lowest level content class and special education resource classes. When this occurs, the special education program is directed to build a class, usually identified as a resource class, to bridge the gap between the regular program and the special education special day classes; hence we have the institutionalization of an alternative/ parallel educational program....a dual system. Special education programs are to meet the unique needs of identified students, but these programs are not to do what regular education is mandated to do.

High schools that have a commitment to the regular education program and the core curriculum and offer a wide range of curricular offerings most often have a special education program that is specifically designed and targeted. Those students identified for special services are indeed needy and clearly meet district criteria. The preceding two statements may be said of a "traditional" special education program; however, the "at risk" students are either underserved in an inappropriate regular education class that they are failing, often not coming to class, acting out, or sleeping through the lecture. The educational program is disjointed at best. Communication and cooperation between regular and special education programs are minimal; there doesn't need to be communication and cooperation. The students from these programs do not integrate nor do the teachers. Special education classes, whether they be resource or special

day classes, attempt to teach the basic curriculum and will give high school credit, much to the concern of the regular content-certified education teachers.

Administrators, teachers (both regular educators and special educators), and students are not satisfied with the traditional model. They know it doesn't work. It especially doesn't work for those students "at risk" and doesn't allow those identified as in need of special services to meet their potential in the least restrictive environment. At two California high schools, Castro Valley High School in the Spring of 1989 and Watsonville High School during the 1989-1990 school year, successful efforts have led to the creation of a more responsive, comprehensive instructional program for all students. The commitment on the part of the administration and faculty is to create a philosophically grounded program. The process of change is multi-dimensional, if one program is to be affected all programs will be affected. In this "progressive/collaborative" high school, course offerings throughout the school's curriculum are designed to meet the educational needs of all the school's students and therefore, allows special education programs to be focused on those who would truly benefit from them; those identified through the student study team and individualized education plan process.

In order to create a "progressive/collaborative" secondary school it is necessary to have a philosophy, a philosophy that can be shared and agreed upon by the entire school community. This philosophy may contain the following beliefs:

1. The least restrictive environment is the goal for all students.
2. Regular and Special Education share responsibility for all students.
3. Regular Education teachers are experts in the content area. Special Education teachers, unless they have a specific content credential, are experts in the modification of curriculum and

instructional methods to meet individual needs. Together, an enhanced curriculum can be offered to better meet the needs of students.

4. Non-identified students, those commonly called "at-risk", will benefit from the collaboration.

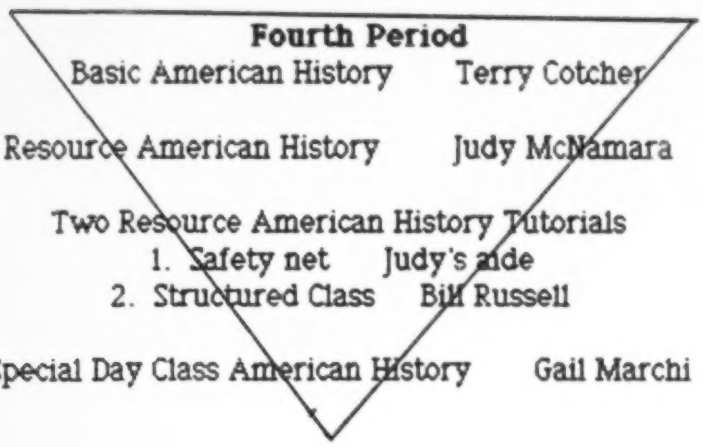
An important element in the success of the progressive/collaboration model at Castro Valley High School was the initial involvement of the district's Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction and the Director of Special Education. All too often special educators have sought to change the regular and special education programs without consulting regular educators or regular education administrators. With this team in place, various hurdles were overcome because of the understanding that individuals "in power" were supportive of the process and its purpose.

The focus for the philosophy revolves around the school's master schedule. This schedule provides the structure by which staff is assigned and courses are to be offered. The master schedule is built sometime between May and August and traditionally, special education students have been scheduled on the basis of the following criteria: they may be able to function in an academically "mainstreamed" setting. The student would then be scheduled for the rest of their academic classes. Another scheduling influence may be their activity interests such as physical education or vocational arts. This may be more common for lower functioning students. The scheduling, even at its best, creates "impure" classes, that is, class sessions that contain 10th grade American History students with 9th grade Mathematics students with 11th grade something else students. Impure, heterogeneous classes, will cause instruction to be ineffective and difficult as well as being antithetical to the collaboration zeitgeist of special education and regular education teachers.

The focus is to create through thoughtful and well considered scheduling, special education classes that are as homogeneous as possible and to create a continuum within an identified time period of classes that are on varied academic levels. This aspect of scheduling is critical because it allows the special education teacher and/or her aide to move with the students to other classroom settings. Heterogeneous classes, those with students with varied academic needs during a certain class period, discourage the movement of the special education teacher and the students to a "higher" content regular education class. It is possible that the special educator moves with the three 10th grade American History students and leaves the other students in the resource room with the resource aide, but it is not the "cleanest" design. Figure 1 graphically represents fourth period at Castro Valley High a school that includes grades 9-12. This period and the identification of American History as the content area was done so because it was felt by the Special Education department that 10th graders would be more able to function in the regular program. The administration and special education faculty felt that 9th graders would be less able to " mainstream" into the regular content program-although some are integrated on an individual basis. American History was identified because Mr. Cotcher, the Department Chair teaches a "basic" class and has a reputation for being open and willing to entertain new ideas along with being an exceptional instructor. Another consideration was that all 10th graders are required to take American History.

The special education schedule was built around American History and Mr. Cotcher. If this class was to be offered another period, the special education support classes would all be changed.

Figure 1.


Fourth Period
Basic American History Terry Cotcher
Resource American History Judy McNamara
Two Resource American History Tutorials
1. Safety net Judy's aide
2. Structured Class Bill Russell
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This continuum illustrates the various options for a 10th grade American history student at Castro Valley offered during fourth period. The beauty of this design, because of its simplicity is that a student can move through the continuum without having to rework his or her schedule.

The Basic American History class and the Resource American History class are combined to create a class of identified special education students as well as students who may be considered "at risk". The class, with twenty-four students, uses the skills and resources of both teachers.

The two Resource American History tutorials provide critical support to the continuum. The first, the structured tutorial, provides American History in a structured environment. Students use the core curriculum text and other materials, but can be more readily supported by the classroom teacher and the special education aide. The second tutorial which is directed by Judy McNamara and led by her special education aide, gives the continuum it's flexibility. In this instance, the special education aide is available to support any student within the continuum by providing one-to-one services, i.e., she may be involved in giving a test to a student orally, taping lectures, providing individual instruction, securing instructional materials, or any of a wide range of supportive activities.

Gail Marchi , the special day class teacher, teaches the most structured and intense of the American History classes. Her class ranges in size from four to eight students and instruction is based on the core curriculum. Because of the continuum, students from each class have moved through the continuum. Most students have moved "up" with one special day class identified student moving into the Basic American History class.

The continuum has been the critical element of the success of the Castro Valley High progressive/collaboration model. It is based on the State/district adopted core curriculum and it makes use of content specialists. The fourth period American History protocol has been replicated in Mathematics and English courses.

Building the schedule is the most strategic element of initiating the progressive/collaborative model. However, schedule implementation may not occur without the support from district administration, school-site administrators and department chairpersons.

The progressive/collaborative model causes a number of transformations in the manner in which secondary schools operate. These changes affect how students are identified, the role of the student study team, assessment procedures, issues regarding curriculum and instruction, and measurement and evaluation procedures. Figure 2 graphically details the changes in procedures that may characterize the two approaches to providing service to secondary school students.

	Traditional	Progressive/Collaborative
referral	few referrals; student study team may be merely pre-referral	active student study team; fewer referrals
	special educator assumes responsibility for referral	cooperative effort with regular,special educators, and school support staff
assessment	assessment for classification	assessment for instruction
	norm referenced tests	criterion referenced; curriculum based measurement
	special educators responsible	shared ownership among administrators, regular educators, special educators
	direct relationship between referrals and identification	high percentage of those referred qualify
curriculum and instruction	dual curriculum special education classes offer "alternative ed."	students use core curriculum; curriculum may be modified regular ed teachers assume responsibility for curriculum
measurement and evaluation	responsibility of spec. ed.	regular ed. teachers assume primary responsibility for evaluation evaluation is on-going use of curriculum based measurement

The progressive/collaborative model as evidenced at Castro Valley and Watsonville High Schools can be implemented at any secondary school, given the commitment, administration directrion and support, faculty cooperation, staff participation and flexibility. Through this model, educators can guide their school to be more efficient and effective for special education students and for those students thought to be "at risk" .

References

Deno, E. (1970). Special education as developmental capital. ***Exceptional Children,*** 37(3), 220-237.

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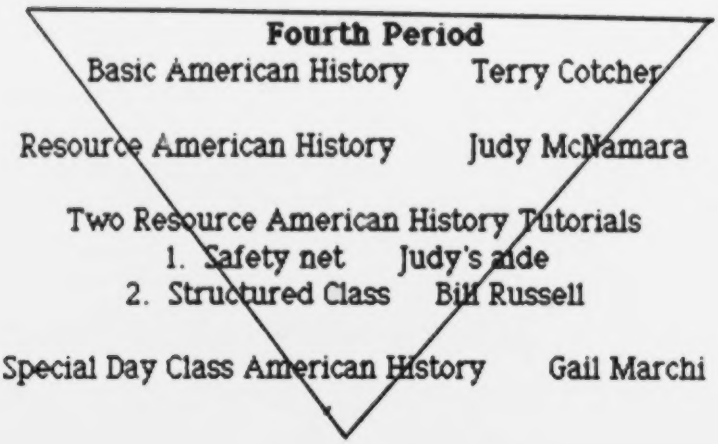
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	special educators responsible	shared ownership among administrators, regular educators, special educators
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